

The Facts about Alaska Educator Accountability



Toward preparing students to be college, career, and culturally ready graduates

New Alaska Educator Accountability

In 2012, the State Board of Education & Early Development adopted new educator evaluation regulations. The new guidelines require educators to be evaluated through observations and input from students and parents.

Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, teachers and administrators also will be evaluated using student learning data. Evaluation should identify educators' strengths and weaknesses, and provide a guide to improve instruction and to grow professionally.

Local control

According to state law, each district's school board is responsible for the district's evaluation system. During the redesign of its evaluation system, the district must consider information from students, parents, community members, classroom teachers, affected collective bargaining units, and administrators.

The new regulations also require that the district consult directly with the educators who are subject to the evaluation system when identifying the appropriate student learning data for the evaluation and when adopting performance standards for student learning.

Adoption Process for New Educator Accountability

At the request of the State Board of Education & Early Development, a group of Alaskan stakeholders was convened to provide recommendations to the State Board to improve the teaching quality in classrooms across Alaska. After numerous meetings, the stakeholders group recommended significant changes to educator evaluation.

Based on those recommendations, new educator evaluation regulations were drafted. After a period of extended public comment, the State Board adopted the new regulations.

Why New Educator Evaluation Requirements?

The state law governing teacher and administrator evaluation was passed in 1996. Since that time, there have been significant changes to the education profession's understanding of how to use evaluation as a means to differentiate between struggling, novice, and exceptional teachers, and to encourage and support appropriate professional growth. New instruments have been developed that help focus the efforts of teachers and administrators on improving the effectiveness of instruction. Measures of student learning have been shown to provide a more complete picture of the effectiveness of teachers and administrators. The importance of the Cultural Standards for Educators in the success of Alaska students has been recognized.

New Requirements Provide For Increased Educator Accountability

Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, Alaska's teachers and administrators will be held accountable for their students' growth. This qualitative data will provide a more complete picture of an educator's efficacy.

Districts, in cooperation with educators, will select appropriate measures and set targets for student growth at the beginning of each school year or instructional period.

At the end of the year or instructional period, the degree to which an educator's students have reached their targets will be factored into the teacher's and administrator's evaluations.

Districts will develop procedures based on objective and measurable criteria to ensure the student data used to evaluate an educator are an accurate reflection of the educator's performance.

Key Changes in Educator Evaluation

The newly adopted evaluation regulations require districts to modify their existing systems. The revised district evaluation systems must:

- Consider selected cultural standards.
- Use student learning data in the evaluation of teachers and administrators.
- Use two to four measures of student growth to determine administrators' and teachers' contributions to student learning.
- Use statewide assessments as one of the measures of student learning, when appropriate statewide assessments are available.
- Assign one of four performance levels--exemplary, proficient, basic, or unsatisfactory--to each standard.
- Assign an overall rating, for the purpose of state reporting, that uses the same four performance levels.
- Provide evaluator training to ensure inter-rater reliability.

Districts are encouraged to:

- Include a plan for professional growth in their educator evaluation system that formally addresses the needs of an educator receiving a rating of basic on two or more standards.
- Use a department-approved, nationally-recognized evaluation framework.

Additional Support

Educators who are rated unsatisfactory on any one standard, including student learning, must be provided additional support through a Plan of Improvement, as previously described in statutes.

Educators rated as basic on two or more standards will receive additional district support. The regulations encourage districts to formalize the district support in a Plan for Professional Growth for educators who have basic skills but still have room to grow to reach proficiency on all standards.

Overall Performance Rating

In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, 20 percent of teachers' and administrators' overall ratings will be dependent on student learning. For 2017-2018,

35 percent of the overall rating will be dependent on student learning. In 2018-2019 and beyond, 50 percent of the overall rating will be dependent on student learning.

State Reporting

Districts will be required to report the number and percentage of educators at each overall performance rating beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. As with student-level data, individually identifiable information will not be made public.

Confidentiality

The rules around evaluation confidentiality have not changed. Educator evaluations are not public records and are not subject to disclosure. The new regulations reinforce this by requiring districts to adopt procedures to protect the confidentiality of the evaluation documents.

For more information, go to

<http://education.alaska.gov/educators.html> and scroll down to Educator Evaluation.

